

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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USIA-15 DRC-01 /097 W

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R 182151Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8045

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3909

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAS PRESS TREATMENT OF ALLEGED C.I.A.

INVOLVEMENT IN CHILE.

1. WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION HONDURAN NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE RECENT STORIES ABOUT CIA INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CHILE HAS CONSISTED OF MERE REPRINTS OF LATIN, UPI AND AP NEWS SERVICE STORIES.

2. EL DIA HAS REPRINTED ONE NEWS SERVICE STORY AND SENSATIONA-
LIST EL CRONISTA PRINTED A UPI RELEASE UNDER LARGE BLUE
HEADLINES WHICH READ "USA INVESTED \$11 MILLION TO FINANCE
OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES AND NEWSPAPERS IN CHILE."

3. THE SAN PEDRO SULA DAILIES LA PRENSA AND LA NOTICIA,
BOTH VERY CONSERVATIVE AND ANTI-COMMUNIST AND JOINTLY
OWNED, HAVE LIMITED THEIR COVERAGE. LA NOTICIA HAS
PRINTED NOTHING AND LA PRENSA HAS CARRIED ONLY TWO WIRE
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SERVICE STORIES, THE FIRST DESCRIBING THE CHILEAN EL

MERCURIO ATTACK ON SENATOR KENNEDY FOR BEING A PARTICIPANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CHILE COMMUNIST INTRIGUE" AND THE SECOND CONCERNING PRESIDENT FORD'S REMARKS ABOUT U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN CHILE.

4. TIEMPO (SAN PEDRO SULA) OF TODAY'S DATE, PROVIDES GREAT CONTRAST TO EARLIER COVERAGE AND DEVOTES ITS ENTIRE FRONT PAGE AND TWO THIRDS OF ITS EDITORIAL SPACE TO THE CIA STORY. PRINTED IN EYE-CATCHING GREEN, TIEMPO CARRIES HEADLINES SAYING: "A CONFESSION, RELEASE OF PROOFS" ALONGSIDE A PHOTO OF PRESIDENT FORD. THE PAGE CONTINUES IN VERY LARGE TYPE TO SAY: "THE HONORABLE GERALD R. FORD, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, HAS PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS COUNTRY AND THE C.I.A. INTERVENED IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CHILE, THAT THEY SUBSIDIZED POLITICAL PARTIES AND NEWSPAPERS CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF DR. SALVADOR ALLENDE. ... AND NOW IN HONDURAS THE TWO REACTIONARY NEWSPAPERS DIRECTED BY THE CIA AGENT MERUELOS, USING THE PSEUDONYMS OF TWO "HONDURAN NEWSPAPERS" (LA PRENSA AND LA NOTICIA), ALSO ARE ENTANGLED IN UNITING THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES WITH GROUPS OF LAND OWNERS AND BUSINESSMEN TO CONFRONT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. ALL HONDURANS SHOULD KNOW THAT THE ULTRARIGHT NEWSPAPERS, WHOSE UNPATRIOTIC WORK HAS BEEN DENOUNCED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF HONDURAS, PREFER TO SERVE SALVADORAN INTERESTS WITH THE PURPOSE OF OVERTHROWING THE CURRENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT." THE PAGE IS SIGNED BY THE HONDURAN COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. TIEMPO'S EDITORIAL PAGE CONSISTS OF A LATIN PRESS STORY AND A REPRINT OF CONGRESSMAN HARRINGTON'S LETTER.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY BIO FILES INDICATE THAT THE "C.I.A. AGENT MERUELOS" REFERRED TO ABOVE IS ROLANDO MERUELO, A U.S. LEGAL RESIDENT OF CUBAN NATIONALITY. HE SERVES AS ADVISOR (ASESOR) TO LA PRENSA AND LA NOTICIA, AND ARRIVED IN HONDURAS IN 1970. IN A JANUARY, 1971 VISIT TO THE EMBASSY HE CLAIMED CREDIT FOR REVERSING LA PRENSA'S "LEFTIST" EDITORIAL POLICY AND ESTABLISHING AN ANTI-COMMUNIST ANTI-CASTRO, PRO U.S. LINE. HE CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY WHO RECANTED AND BECAME CONFIDENTIAL

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MILITANTLY ANTI-COMMUNIST. HE CARRIES A PERSONAL GRUDGE, APPARENTLY RECIPROCATED, WITH TIEMPO AND ITS EDITORIALIST MANUEL GAMERO WHO, ACCORDING TO MERUELO, IS "A LONG TIME COMMUNIST ACTIVIST."
SANCHEZ

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